

**The Investigation of Chinese Learners' Identities and Their English
Language Learning Journeys in Britain**

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Abstract

Though an increasing number of research studies have investigated the relationship between second language learning and identity, few of them have focused on the study abroad context. In this study of a group of Chinese learners in three language schools in Britain, I explore how Chinese learners' identities (including aspects of gender, nationality, social class and as language learners) influence their English language learning journeys in Britain, and how their identities may themselves be shaped by the English language learning discourse in the language classroom and outside the language classroom.

The research methodology follows broadly ethnographic and case study research principles. The data is obtained from narrative interviews, ethnographic observation, face-to-face conversations, telephone conversations, email correspondence and diary studies. From the collected data, it appears that during the English language learning journey in Britain, the Chinese learners' social development becomes fundamental, not ancillary, to their second language learning. They have learnt about English language, British culture and British society, but perhaps more importantly, they have negotiated their identities, and have achieved new knowledge of their own senses of the self.

This present study is significant, because it offers rich insights into Chinese learners' English learning and living experiences in Britain, and it particularly explores social class identity and national identity in relation to second language learning and use, which has been under-studied in the general field of second language learning research.